United Nations CEDAW/C/SR.1379

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
1 March 2016

English only

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Sixty-third session

Summary record of the 1379th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 18 February 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Hayashi

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Sweden (CEDAW/C/SWE/8-9; CEDAW/C/SWE/Q/8-9 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Sweden took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Baralt** (Sweden), introducing her country's combined eighth and ninth periodic reports (CEDAW/C/SWE/8-9), said that Sweden had a feminist government and that the composition of the delegation reflected the broad scope of national policies to promote gender equality, which was a precondition and driver for sustainable growth and welfare. Sweden had been among the first countries to ratify the Convention, and the Government was proud of its record on gender equality, but it also acknowledged that women and girls continued to be at a disadvantage and that steps should be taken to increase the visibility of the Convention. The Committee's concluding observations would therefore be translated and widely distributed.

3. Since the submission of the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports in 2014, a new Administration had taken office. The Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven, was committed to achieving gender equality. To that end, training on gender mainstreaming had been provided to all Ministers and State Secretaries, indicators had been developed to monitor progress in key policy areas, support for gender mainstreaming had been offered to government agencies, and all ministries had been requested to incorporate a gender perspective in future policy proposals. In 2014, the Government had commissioned a committee of inquiry to review gender equality objectives and to assess the progress made over the previous 10 years. A detailed enumeration of those objectives would be drawn up by that committee and would be submitted to parliament in September 2016.

4. The Government had played an active role in helping the country's municipalities and county councils to mainstream a gender perspective into their public services, not least by signing an agreement with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions to promote the involvement of men and boys in gender equality activities at the local level.

5. A committee of inquiry had also been set up to propose ways of streamlining anti-discrimination efforts, which remained a priority for the Government and would be an important component of a new disability policy that would be presented in the autumn of 2016. A gender perspective had been incorporated into the national strategy for Roma inclusion, and the Sami parliament was drafting an action plan on gender mainstreaming for its staff and for the Sami public at large.

6. Fathers had recently been granted a third month of paid paternity leave to encourage them to share childcare responsibilities and to promote women's employment. To combat violence against women, the Government was designing a holistic strategy and investing in violence prevention measures with the cooperation of schools and of counselling and rehabilitation centres for perpetrators of such violence. It also allocated more than €10 million per year to shelters for women suffering from substance abuse problems, women with disabilities, women who had been involved in prostitution and women victims of human trafficking. Although women with disabilities were served by general programmes for the prevention of violence against women, the Swedish Agency for Participation had been tasked with preparing a specific action plan for that group. To strengthen the legal protection available to women victims of violence, the Government had commissioned a review of the

Criminal Code provisions on rape and was contemplating the introduction of consent-based legislation that would establish the offence of negligent rape.

7. Since 1995, street prostitution in Sweden had been halved, and the overall number of people engaged in prostitution had not increased, thanks in part to legislation on sexual offences and to efforts to reduce the demand for sexual services. In September 2014, a commission had been appointed to look into the removal of the requirement of double criminality in cases involving the purchase of sexual services.

8. To address persistent gender inequalities in the area of health care, the Government had created the National Commission for Equity in Health and was providing additional funding for parental support mechanisms and health services in schools to promote child mental health.

9. The Swedish Public Employment Service had been requested to tailor its activities in ways that would boost gender equality. The Government had raised temporary parental benefits, which were predominantly claimed by women, and was considering making changes in the parental insurance scheme in order to foster gender-equal parenting. Steps had been taken to counter an increase in temporary employment, which was a situation that women found themselves in more frequently than men, and a legislative amendment had been passed requiring the conversion of fixed-term contracts to indefinite contracts when the aggregate length of employment exceeded two years. The Government had also put forward a bill to reintroduce mandatory annual pay surveys in order to detect any instances of gender-based wage discrimination.

10. As to women's representation, although gender-balanced boards and management teams were in place in State-owned companies, the private sector was lagging behind. The Government had stated that at least 40 per cent of board members should be women by the end of 2016. If that objective was not achieved, it would, for the first time ever, propose legislation providing for quotas. To bridge the gender pension gap, measures had been adopted to increase women's pensions as part of a wider reform aimed at raising the income tax allowance for all pensioners.

11. Steps had been taken to enhance the quality of the educational and vocational guidance given to students in compulsory, upper secondary and higher education to ensure that their study and career choices were not constrained by their gender. Efforts were being made to boost the number of women professors, who accounted for just 25 per cent of the total, and the Government had set up a commission to propose measures for making research a more attractive career choice for both women and men.

12. The Government had recently presented its action plan for the implementation of a feminist foreign policy through which it hoped to promote the active participation of women in peace processes and strengthen the human rights of women and girls in humanitarian settings. It had also begun to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

13. In 2015, Sweden had received 160,000 asylum applicants, of whom around 35,000 had been unaccompanied minors. The mass influx of refugees had put the reception system, social services and schools under considerable pressure. The Government had responded by providing financial assistance and by facilitating the participation in the labour market of all residents, including migrants. It was aware of the gender-related challenges posed by the new situation and stood ready to play a leading role in the defence of women's rights within Europe and beyond.

Articles 1 to 6

14. **Ms. Schulz** said that she would like to know whether the Government was planning to incorporate the Convention into national law in order to enhance its visibility and to enable women to invoke it directly before the courts. She wondered why the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Discrimination Act was not exhaustive, what effect that had on the enjoyment of rights by women, particularly those who were at risk of multiple discrimination, and whether the Government intended to harmonize the list with the open-ended one set out in the Constitution. An update on the time frame for the possible establishment of a national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles would be appreciated, as well as any available information on what that institution's future mandate with regard to gender equality and multiple discrimination might be.

15. **Ms. Ameline** said that she wished to know what measures would be taken in cooperation with civil society to increase the visibility of the Convention and the Committee's concluding observations. She would also welcome information on the steps being taken to facilitate family reunification and to provide support on the ground for women migrants. It would be helpful for the delegation to elaborate on the national strategy for Roma inclusion and on the gender mainstreaming action plan that was being drafted by the Sami parliament.

16. **Ms. Pimentel** said that she was interested in learning whether the State party's asylum legislation had been evaluated and what was being done to ensure that it was comprehensible to asylum applicants. She wondered whether the Government had considered introducing mandatory training for all legal professionals on sexual crimes and on violence against women. Lastly, she wished to know whether the justice system catered to the language needs of migrants and minorities, whether it was accessible in remote areas and whether efforts were being made to monitor its effectiveness, particularly in terms of responding to the needs of women.

17. **Ms. Baralt** (Sweden) said that the Government was committed to maintaining social cohesion and to creating a culture of respect for all human rights. All its policy decisions incorporated a consideration of the needs of the most vulnerable groups in Swedish society, which included women and girls who were foreign nationals and women with disabilities. A recognition and understanding of the rights enshrined in the Convention had to be fostered through the provision of appropriate training and public awareness campaigns. One of the major challenges facing the Government was the question of how to reconcile the different cultural backgrounds of migrants entering Sweden with the established Swedish culture of respect for women's rights when the two were at variance. It was clear that a raft of special measures would need to be adopted for that purpose.

18. **Ms. Schölin** (Sweden) said that, as Sweden had a dualistic legal system, in order for international instruments to be applicable, they had to be translated into Swedish law or incorporated therein by means of a special statute. In Sweden, the most common approach was the latter. To date, only the European Convention on Human Rights had been fully incorporated. There were no plans to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act to include an open-ended list of grounds of discrimination at that time. In 2016, the Government would submit a new national human rights plan to the national parliament in which it would recommend the creation of a national independent human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles. The decision regarding the creation of such an institution would be taken by the national parliament.

19. **Ms. Peyron** (Sweden) said that, as part of its strategy for dealing with the challenges presented by the large influx of migrants, in the autumn of 2015 the

Government had drafted a proposal for a temporary law that would, among other things restrict the granting of residence permits and had submitted the proposal to stakeholders for consultation. The purpose of the law would be to bring Swedish asylum regulations into line with those of the European Union. The corresponding bill, which was still subject to approval by the national parliament, provided that refugees admitted under the country's official refugee quota would still receive a permanent residence permit, whereas refugees and persons who were eligible for subsidiary protection would be issued with a temporary residence permit. Temporary residence permits could be renewed, provided that grounds for protection still existed. The proposed law would also place certain restrictions on the right to family reunification. However, refugees would retain the right to be reunited with spouses, partners and children under 18 years of age. The temporary measures proposed in the law would, if it was passed, remain in force for three years and were in keeping with the country's obligations under international and European Union law. Moreover, the gender perspective was always taken into account when processing asylum applications. The action plan for gender mainstreaming devised by the Swedish Migration Board ensured that the specificities of different types of violence, such as domestic and so-called "honour-related" violence, were integrated into the investigative techniques used in each case. The Board would also conduct a risk assessment of vulnerable groups, and the results of that assessment would be taken into account when processing the asylum applications of members of those groups. Furthermore, the Aliens Act contained specific provisions for the protection of vulnerable women.

20. **Mr. Olsson** (Sweden) said that the Swedish Migration Board provided general information on how to navigate the asylum process in a number of different languages. Asylum seekers who were victims of sex crimes had the same rights as Swedish victims of such crimes and had access to an interpreter and information about the relevant legal proceedings. While several training programmes for judges and judicial officers had been developed, in the interests of preserving the independence of the judiciary, they could not be made compulsory. However, the Government recognized the need to increase the uptake of such programmes and was working to achieve that goal.

21. **Ms. Schölin** (Sweden) said that the Government had introduced special procedures for reporting to international human rights bodies and for giving effect to their recommendations. When appropriate, action plans could also be devised on the basis of such recommendations.

22. **Mr. Hellström** (Sweden) said that the Government's national minority policy had been adopted in 2010 and included a gender perspective. Special measures were in place for the benefit of national minorities in the health and education sectors. The five national minorities of Sweden were consulted on all policy decisions concerning them. The Government was committed to strengthening its dialogue with the Sami and had increased the funding for the Sami parliament. The national strategy for Roma inclusion would run until 2032, and several measures had been taken to ensure that Roma women enjoyed their rights on an equal footing with Roma men and other Swedish citizens.

23. **Ms. Ameline** said that it would be useful to assess the effectiveness of the legal system in terms of the application of the Convention and to remedy any shortcomings in that regard. She would like to learn more about the status of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, commonly known as the Istanbul Convention, in the State party's domestic legal order and about its approach to the enforcement of that treaty.

24. **Ms. Jahan** asked whether the State party had conducted a gender impact assessment of the proposed temporary law that, if passed, would restrict the granting

of residence permits and the right to family reunification of asylum seekers in Sweden. She invited the State party to refer to the Committee's general recommendation No. 32 on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women before finalizing its proposal.

25. **Ms. Pimentel** said that the report was all but silent on the prevalence of discrimination against Muslim women, particularly those who wore a veil. What measures was the State party taking to combat that form of discrimination?

26. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** said that Sweden was to be commended on the work it had done with a view to the introduction of gender quotas in private corporations. It would be helpful for the delegation to elaborate on the reasons behind the decision not to make training courses on gender-based violence compulsory for judges and judicial officers.

27. **Ms. Schulz** said that the complexity of the Anti-Discrimination Act underscored the need for training on gender-based discrimination and for effective monitoring of the legal system to ensure compliance with the Convention. The State party should allocate sufficient human and financial resources to ensure the accessibility of services for victims of gender-based discrimination.

28. **Ms. Baralt** (Sweden) said that judges and judicial officers were fully aware of the importance that the Government attached to respect for all human rights and so would be unlikely to refuse to attend training courses on gender-based violence. However, she was not convinced of the need to make attending such courses compulsory. As to the general approach taken to combating discrimination, the Government was in favour of tackling each form of discrimination under a separate action plan so as to avoid conflating one with another.

29. **Mr. Olsson** (Sweden) said that compliance with the Convention in the Swedish legal system was subject to constant monitoring. Over the previous eight years, more than €1 billion had been invested in improving the efficiency and capacity of the judiciary, and more than 3,000 police officers had been recruited and trained. The Committee on Sexual Offences was in the process of reviewing the procedures for dealing with the crime of rape with a view to increasing their effectiveness. Moreover, the National Council for Crime Prevention was looking into the reasons for the low rate of convictions for certain offences. Details on the steps being taken to implement the Istanbul Convention could be found on the Government's human rights website. While training courses on gender-based violence were made freely available to judges and judicial officers, it was feared that making attendance at such courses compulsory could be viewed as interference on the part of the executive and an attempt to undermine the independence of the judiciary. Furthermore, there was little point in making attendance at such courses compulsory, as there was no way of sanctioning any judges or judicial officers who failed to comply. It should also be noted that newly appointed judges received training on the different forms of gender-based violence as part of their basic training package.

30. **Ms. Nilsson Kelly** (Sweden) said that the Higher Education Authority had been commissioned to analyse the coverage of human rights issues, gender-based violence and violence against children in the higher education curricula designed for students wishing to enter professions in the social, health and justice sectors. The Authority had found that, while human rights issues were included in almost all university curricula, the opposite was true in the case of gender-based violence and violence against children. The Authority had suggested making the latter two issues compulsory components of curricula designed for students wishing to enter professions where they would come into contact with victims of violence. The Government had decided to carry that suggestion forward.

31. **Ms. Peyron** (Sweden) said that Sweden had received unprecedented levels of refugees, including 80,000 Syrian nationals and members of their families. In 2015, the number of people in need of international protection had amounted to 1.9 per cent of the country's total population, making Sweden the largest receiving country in per capita terms in the European Union. The Government was working closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to analyse the gender implications of such a large influx of refugees. Under the proposed temporary law, persons granted subsidiary protection would have a right to family reunification if they had applied for asylum by November 2015.

32. **Ms. Schölin** (Sweden) said that Muslim women could easily fall victim to multiple forms of discrimination and that the Anti-Discrimination Act covered discrimination on the grounds of both religion and gender. Indeed, the aim of merging several pieces of anti-discrimination legislation into the Anti-Discrimination Act had been to consolidate existing anti-discrimination provisions to offer more comprehensive protection against multiple forms of discrimination. The Equality Ombudsman had found that individual complaints typically cited more than one ground for discrimination and had brought several cases of multiple discrimination to court. Moreover, a special adviser had been appointed to provide guidance on how best to guarantee the effectiveness of anti-discrimination initiatives and ensure access to support for victims.

33. **Ms. Pimentel** said that, while it might not be possible for the executive to compel judges and judicial officers to attend training courses, there was no reason why the judiciary itself could not do so.

34. **Ms. Nadaraia** said that she wished to know more about the findings of the gender equality study conducted in 2015 and about how the State party planned to give effect to the recommendations arising from it. She wished to know what progress had been made towards adopting the new national human rights plan and whether it gave due prominence to women's rights and gender equality.

35. **Ms. Pomeranzi** said that she would welcome additional information on the qualitative evaluation that had been conducted of the Government's gender mainstreaming programme and on the new strategy that had been introduced in conjunction with it. Which institution was responsible for managing and monitoring the implementation of the new strategy? She would appreciate an account of the gender-sensitive budgeting methods being applied and would like to know which institution was responsible for overseeing their application. She would also be interested to hear the delegation's observations regarding reports from alternative sources that, after 20 years of implementation, the gender mainstreaming strategy had lost its initial transformative power and was, in fact, diluting efforts to attain gender equality.

36. **Ms. Nwankwo**, referring to the most recent version of the Inter-Parliamentary Union world classification on women in national parliaments, said that the fact that Sweden had dropped from second to fifth place reflected a dangerous decline which should be addressed as a matter of urgency. Although women in Sweden had attained higher levels of education than men in several fields, that fact did not appear to have translated into comparable levels of representation in academic or corporate leadership positions. Since voluntary gender quotas for senior positions in the private sector did not guarantee the desired results, the Government should consider adopting legally binding quotas in order to accelerate the realization of women's de facto equality with men in that respect. She wished to know whether the State party planned to take proactive measures, including capacity-building, to help more women prepare for such

positions. Were there any projects in place aimed at helping men to gain a proper understanding of the importance of gender equality?

37. **Ms. Baralt** (Sweden) said that the Government had just concluded consultations with civil society and major institutions on how to increase the effectiveness of equal opportunity policies and initiatives for combating violence against women. The question of how to monitor the implementation of the new gender policy was still being studied, but consideration was being given to the possibility of establishing an agency that would be exclusively devoted to ensuring equality of opportunity. The Government maintained a close dialogue with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and was earmarking additional funding for measures to improve gender equality at the local and regional levels, as well as evaluating the results of that effort. The institution responsible for managing the gender-sensitive budgeting process was the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, which worked in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance in that connection.

38. The Government of Sweden did not shy away from quotas and would use all possible means to address remaining gender imbalances. It was a colossal waste of resources for academic institutions and companies to fail to benefit fully from the ideas and expertise of their many highly educated female employees by denying them senior positions.

39. **Mr. Florin** (Sweden) said that the strategy for gender mainstreaming in the civil service was based on the five guidelines set out in paragraph 9 of the State party's report (CEDAW/C/SWE/8-9). Its implementation was reviewed annually by Statistics Sweden, whose assessment showed that, in the period from 2013 to 2014, an increasing number of official reports and ministerial communications included a gender equality analysis. Some of the objectives of the new gender mainstreaming strategy were: to intensify efforts to combat Internet threats and violations; to reduce the number of persons subjected to violence in intimate relationships; to counteract gender segregation in the labour market; and to increase the number of female police and coast guard officers.

40. **Ms. Schölin** (Sweden) said that a human rights strategy was currently being developed, so detailed information on its contents was not yet available, but gender rights were obviously human rights and would therefore clearly be included.

41. **Mr. Hellström** (Sweden) said that the reasons for the declining representation of women in the Swedish parliament included the entry of a new political party, which had reduced the number of seats allocated to the other parties and nullified the usefulness of alternate lists, since only one member of parliament was elected for each circuit. It should be noted, however, that measures to increase women's representation fell within the remit of the parliament and the political parties themselves, rather than that of the executive branch. In an effort to address the situation, the Committee for Grants had increased the funding for the representation of women within political parties. At the international level, women made up 55 per cent of the Swedish members of the European Parliament.

42. **Ms. Broström** (Sweden) said that, according to the most recent statistics, 29 per cent of the members of boards of directors of listed companies were women. Although that figure was below the Government's stated objective of 40 per cent, it nevertheless represented a 5 per cent increase over the previous two years. The Government had made companies well aware of gender equality targets, and the extent to which companies had met those targets before the end of 2016 would determine whether or not legislation on a binding quota would be put to a vote.

43. **Ms. Pomeranzi** asked whether any other gender mainstreaming benchmarks or indicators were being used, apart from the number of official documents that included

a gender equality analysis. It should be recalled that gender mainstreaming involved a transformative process within each government institution.

44. **Ms. Schulz** said that she wondered whether the prominence given to gender equality might symbolically and practically be better served if the minister responsible for gender equality were attached to the Office of the Prime Minister or that of the Finance Minister, as opposed to the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. She questioned the effectiveness of lumping gender equality, which was a central issue in a global society, together with issues of importance for specific groups within the population, such as children and the elderly.

45. **Ms. Ameline** said that the Government might wish to consider using results-based techniques when reviewing its current gender equality strategy and formulating the new one. Given that, as a member of the European Union, Sweden was prohibited from producing statistics on ethnic origin, she wondered how the Government assessed the situation of its ethnic minorities. It might be useful to set up an oversight committee within the Swedish parliament to monitor the implementation of international conventions. Another measure that might also be helpful could be to set up a certification programme to award companies that had achieved exemplary levels of gender equality as a means of portraying such achievements as a positive investment rather than as a constraint.

46. **Ms. Baralt** (Sweden) said that, even though the Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality had a large portfolio to manage, an important synergy was created by working with three such important parts of the social affairs sector, where women were the key agents.

47. **Mr. Florin** (Sweden) said that 1 million Swedish krona per year had been allocated for the evaluation of the Government's gender mainstreaming efforts for the period from 2016 to 2018. The Government relied on indicators developed by Statistics Sweden, which had been producing facts and figures on men and women since 1984. In 2011, it had been given special instructions to develop indicators on gender mainstreaming. Those indicators were linked to the Swedish gender equality policy and were updated biannually. With assistance from the central government, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions had developed a gender mainstreaming programme and guidelines to assist municipalities in benchmarking their gender mainstreaming methods and processes. Those initiatives were a work in progress, and better coordination of the gender mainstreaming efforts of the three levels of government was needed. An excellent booklet containing facts and figures on women and men in Sweden had been posted on the Statistics Sweden website.

48. **Ms. Schölin** (Sweden) said that, as part of its human rights strategy, the Government would recommend the establishment of an independent national institution to monitor gender equality in parliament. Sweden did not compile official statistics on ethnic or religious groups for well-known reasons. However, other tools were used to collect information on the living conditions of various segments of the population, such as the study on self-perceived discrimination carried out by the Equality Ombudsman.

49. **Ms. Broström** (Sweden) said that the underrepresentation of women in business leadership positions had less to do with capacity-building than it did with ensuring that women had the same opportunities as men to start and run companies, to access capital and to reach their full potential in all areas of the business sector. To that end, several private initiatives had been developed; for example, there was a company that drew up lists of highly competent women who would be strong candidates for positions traditionally occupied by men. There was also a special programme for men on women's leadership and gender equality.

50. **Ms. Jahan** said that focused attention was needed to combat the prevalence of gender stereotypes, sexism, patriarchal attitudes and the sexualization of women in Sweden. She would like to know what specific measures would be taken by the State party to prohibit Internet access to pornographic imagery of women and so-called "revenge porn", as well as to legally ban gender discrimination in advertising. Those problems should be addressed through a comprehensive strategy to combat gender stereotyping that took into account the special needs of women from minority communities, such as Roma, Sami and migrant women, who were often targets of hate speech and racially motivated violence.

51. Given the wide gap between the numbers of cases of violence against women that were reported and that were prosecuted, greater emphasis should be placed on developing more thorough and effective methods for investigating such incidents and on providing gender-sensitivity training for law enforcement personnel. When considering the introduction of a consent-based provision on the offence of rape in its Criminal Code, the State party should ensure that consent was defined explicitly. She would like to know what the expected time frame was for the adoption of a national strategy for combating violence against women and whether it would include components that focused on minority groups. She wished to know how the implementation of measures to combat female genital mutilation was monitored and what sanctions were applied to offenders. Were the same sanctions applied in cases where the State party exercised extraterritorial jurisdiction? She would also like to know more about the State party's efforts to put an end to forced marriages.

52. **Ms. Leinarte** said that, since studies had shown that the 1999 Sex Purchase Act was a highly effective legal instrument, she would be interested to know how the Swedish model might be adopted globally. She also wished to know whether the action plan for combating prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes included separate programmes for victims of trafficking and for women wishing to leave prostitution. Although some of the circumstances surrounding cases of trafficking and cases of prostitution might be the same, efforts to support women in those situations required quite different approaches. With reference to paragraph 71 of the replies to the list of issues (CEDAW/C/SWE/Q/7-8/Add.1), she failed to see the link between women who were victims of human trafficking or who were in prostitution and the counselling services provided by the Swedish Prison and Probation Service. It was her understanding that such women did not face criminal penalties.

53. **Mr. Hellström** (Sweden), replying to a question posed by Ms. Jahan, said that the advertising industry had established a self-regulatory ombudsman's office which provided information and training in an effort to contribute to the creation of a better advertising climate. The advertising industry also required advertisers to comply with the Consolidated Code of the International Chamber of Commerce. Under the Constitution, the freedom of the press and freedom of expression were nearly absolute, and censorship was prohibited; therefore, any attempt to interfere in or exert control over the media would not be in line with the Constitution. Various public inquiries into discriminatory advertising and the provisions of the Constitution had been conducted and had reached differing conclusions. As the Government did have the authority to regulate some aspects of the work of public service broadcasters, however, they were required to provide annual statistics on equal representation in the media. Other media enterprises were not publicly funded and thus could not be obliged to do the same. Universities did, however, regularly produce statistics and reports on that issue. All broadcasters, including companies that provided content online, were required to ensure that any pornographic material was preceded by a warning and that it was not broadcast at times when it was likely to be seen by children.

54. As to the question on ethnic minorities and the risk of domestic violence, although the Government did not compile statistics disaggregated by ethnicity, there were certain qualitative processes in place to provide information on such issues. For example, a study on how ethnic minority victims of domestic violence were treated by the authorities had been conducted which had found that greater cultural sensitivity was needed. Consequently, further information and training were being provided to staff in social services, the police and health-care services.

55. **Mr. Olsson** (Sweden) said that the Committee on Sexual Offences had been tasked with developing recommendations regarding consent-based legal provisions on the offence of rape and with determining why so few reports of rape led to prosecutions and convictions and how to improve the performance of the justice system in that respect. It was scheduled to present its findings by October 2016. The Ministry of Justice had already announced that the 2014 legislation on forced marriages would undergo review, but that was unlikely to occur before 2017. The updated provisional statistics for 2015 indicated that there had been 35 cases involving the offence of forced marriage and 11 cases involving the offence of misleading someone for the purposes of forcing them into marriage.

56. Sweden was of course proud of its innovative sex purchase legislation and hoped that other countries would follow its lead. It was, however, difficult to determine exactly how the Swedish model might be implemented globally. The European Union coordinated a network of national anti-trafficking mechanisms, and several other European countries had already implemented similar legislation. The Swedish Institute had been tasked with assisting interested countries to study his country's work in that connection. In response to a question asked by Ms. Leinarte, he could confirm that women were not prosecuted or imprisoned for engaging in prostitution. The counselling programmes of the Swedish Prison and Probation Service were aimed at women who had been imprisoned for different crimes and who were then offered those services following an assessment.

57. **Ms. Nilsson Kelly** (Sweden) said that no strategy was currently in place regarding women and prostitution, although there was a forthcoming plan for combating the sexual exploitation of children. It was possible that a component on prostitution might be included in the strategy for combating violence against women, but no decision on that point had yet been taken.

58. **Mr. Florin** (Sweden) said that he would like to add that the planned strategy for combating violence against women would be holistic in that it would deal with both offenders and victims, who might not necessarily be men and women, respectively, but might also be transgender or intersex persons.

59. **Ms. Baralt** (Sweden), referring to the use of the Swedish Sex Purchase Act as a global model, said that many countries sent study groups to Sweden in order to gather data for use in assessing the implications of that legislation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was actively involved in disseminating information and raising the level of discussion on trafficking at the international level. The Government would welcome the suggestions of the Committee in that regard since it was currently considering how to make the country's voice heard globally in the discussion on ways to counter trafficking, especially in the light of the increase in migration and the large numbers of unaccompanied migrant children, who were potential trafficking victims.

60. **Ms. Ameline** said that she wished to know whether an attempt had been made to measure the impact on society of the introduction of gender-neutral language in the Constitution. She would appreciate further information on the results of the action plan for combating violence against women, on the effectiveness of the electronic

monitoring of offenders and on the reasons why the violent crime rate was so high in such a highly developed, gender-aware country as Sweden.

61. **Ms. Leinarte** said that she would be grateful for clarification on the action plans that were currently in place, since the State party's report and its replies to the list of issues seemed to refer to two separate plans, one on prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes, which was clearly not aimed at children, and another to protect children from human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse.

62. **Ms. Jahan** said that she would welcome further clarification on the statement that interference with the media was not in line with the Constitution, particularly in the light of the fact that other Nordic countries with similar constitutional arrangements had reportedly passed legislation to ban gender discrimination in advertisements. Given that a report from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention had found that the sexual harassment and molestation of girls and women were to a large extent due to the prevalence of pornographic imagery on the Internet and in the media, she wished to know how the State party intended to address that issue, since it was not sufficient to simply display a warning prior to broadcasting pornographic content. Stricter controls were necessary to prevent children from accessing such materials.

63. Lastly, since Sweden had ratified the Arms Trade Treaty, and in consideration of the Committee's general comment No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, she wished to know whether the State party was systematically conducting gender-sensitive risk assessments of the impact of international transfers of arms.

64. **Ms. Schulz** said that, in the light of media reports that a number of unaccompanied minors had disappeared after having arrived in Sweden, possibly becoming victims of trafficking, she wished to know whether the Swedish Migration Agency had developed new methods to counter the trafficking of children. What practical steps had been taken to ensure that unaccompanied migrant children, and in particular girls, did not fall prey to trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation? She wondered whether, generally speaking, prostitution and trafficking were being conflated and whether the emphasis placed on putting an end to prostitution, even when it was not forced prostitution, was detracting from efforts to combat trafficking for the purposes of other forms of forced labour. With that in mind, she wished to know whether all forms of such trafficking had been taken into consideration.

65. **Ms. Baralt** (Sweden) said that the vast majority of unaccompanied minors arriving in Sweden were boys and that a study carried out to identify the causes of those disappearances had detected two significant risk factors. First, the registration period had become quite lengthy due to the sheer volume of people arriving in Sweden. Consequently, minors had been kept in registration centres for longer than anticipated and some had left of their own accord to see if the process might be quicker elsewhere or to find family relations. Action had now been taken to speed up the process, reducing it from as much as two months, in certain cases, to one week. Second, although every effort was made to place children in areas close to family relations or other connections and to establish an adult support network around them, some minors simply left the family or institution in which they had been placed. However, some children, particularly girls, were indeed at risk, and a specific action plan was being formulated to address that issue. What was important was for the authorities to work with those minors, establish a relationship and ensure that they were aware of their rights. The tendency at the European Union level had been to focus on trafficking for other forms of forced labour rather than trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation. In Sweden, efforts had been made to tackle trafficking

in all its forms, but much more needed to be done to combat trafficking for sexual purposes, in particular.

66. **Mr. Hellström** (Sweden), replying to a question regarding gender discrimination in advertising, said that while it was true that other Nordic countries had similar constitutional arrangements, the provisions on freedom of the press and freedom of expression in the Swedish Constitution were broader in scope, making it more difficult to implement legislation that restricted what could be published. The Swedish Media Council had incorporated a gender equality perspective into its work and was gathering information on how girls and boys were affected by media content, including online pornography. That information would be used to shape awareness-raising measures for members of the media.

67. **Mr. Olsson** (Sweden) said that the evaluation of the two treatment programmes for male sex offenders and violent offenders had not identified any significant results. It was clear that the process for initiating treatment was inefficient, and prisons had been tasked with accelerating that process. The Government was actively monitoring the results of a pilot scheme led by bilingual coaches aimed at ensuring that non-Swedish-speaking offenders also participated in those programmes. While the violent crime rate was by no means high in comparison with other countries, every woman who was exposed to violence was one too many. The root causes were difficult to pinpoint but the fact that it was not socially acceptable to discuss the issue was a problem. Improvements in gender equality had resulted in higher reporting rates, which was precisely what was needed. As to electronic monitoring, there had been only a handful of cases to date, and a special investigator had recently been appointed to perform a review of that procedure.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.